MASLOW: THE FIRST STEP IN COIN

King, Anthony A.

Conference Group 9

Major Ryan C. Leaman

6 January 09

		Form Approved
Report Documentation Page		OMB No. 0704-0188

Public reporting burden for the collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to a penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number.

1. REPORT DATE **06 JAN 2009**	2. REPORT TYPE	3. DATES COVERED **00-00-2009 to 00-00-2009**

4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE **MASLOW: The First Step in Coin**	5a. CONTRACT NUMBER
	5b. GRANT NUMBER
	5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER
6. AUTHOR(S)	5d. PROJECT NUMBER
	5e. TASK NUMBER
	5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER

7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) **United States Marine Corps,Command and Staff College, Marine Corps Combat Development Command,Marine Corps University, 2076 South Street,Quantico,VA,22134-5068**	8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER

9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)	10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)
	11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)

12. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT
Approved for public release; distribution unlimited

13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES

14. ABSTRACT

15. SUBJECT TERMS

16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT	18. NUMBER OF PAGES	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
a. REPORT **unclassified**	b. ABSTRACT **unclassified**	c. THIS PAGE **unclassified**	**Same as Report (SAR)**	**12**	

Standard Form 298 (Rev. 8-98)
Prescribed by ANSI Std Z39-18

A Marine with experience in the operating environments of the past decade will understand that no matter where operations are located on the spectrum of violence, they are about people. Hostile, neutral, or friendly, people are the center of gravity in what militaries do. (Salmoni and Holmes-Eber 2008)

Since 11 September 2001, the American military has been learning important lessons on how to fight among the populace of another country in military operations most commonly known as counterinsurgency operations, or COIN. These lessons have resulted in the re-writing of the counterinsurgency manual (MCWP 3-33.5), the institution of several initiatives centered on cultural training, and new successes in COIN operations. Cultural considerations are vital in earning the trust of the local populace and creating a more permissive operating environment for local security forces and coalition forces. Understanding different cultures can be an enormously complex problem – sometimes too complex for the small unit leader to consider completely in exigent circumstances. During COIN Operations, Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs can be a useful tool for Marines at the company level because it enables them to appreciate the physiological needs of the local populace, thereby denying an insurgency its center of gravity.

The Complexities of Culture

Our interaction with a growing variety of foreign peoples
and societies will require us to make understanding culture
a basic component of training. (Salmoni and Holmes-Eber
2008)

Understanding culture, and more importantly for Marines,
how culture impacts them operationally, is a difficult, yet
important task. Culture cannot be measured or quantified, and
it is ever-changing in response to actors from all sides. An
excellent resource for Marines in understanding culture is
Operational Culture for the Warfighter, a book authored by Barak
A. Salmoni and Paula Holmes-Eber at the Marine Corps Center for
Advanced Operational Cultural Learning (CAOCL). In this book,
they propose "Operational Culture" as that aspect of culture
that is relevant to the warfighter. They also provide a
framework of understanding operational culture, called the Five
Operational Cultural Dimensions. These five dimensions focus on
the physical environment, the economy, the social structure, the
political structure, and the belief system(s).

This proposed framework will undoubtedly provide a valuable
tool for COIN planners at the strategic, operational, and higher

tactical levels. However, the tactical warfighter, the company grade officer responsible for ever-increasing expanses of territory and numbers of people in Distributed Operations (DO), needs something simpler when considering any action among the populace in his/her area of operations (AO). A theoretical construct called Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, proposed by the psychologist Abraham Maslow in 1943, may provide a more intuitive means of addressing the needs of the population in the near term and create a permissive environment for follow-on counterinsurgency efforts.

<div align="center">Maslow's Hierarchy</div>

Depicted in Figure 1, Maslow's theory, as outlined in his paper *A Theory of Human Motivation*, attempts to understand the motivations of humans as a function of their needs, starting with base physical needs and ending with what Maslow calls "Self Actualization." (Maslow 2007) The base of this pyramid is made up of what Maslow calls Deficiency Needs, or those needs that are required to sustain life. The next tier of needs concerns security and safety, conditions that are often found wanting in impoverished countries reeling from the effects of war. Higher levels involve particularly human traits such as friendship, love and feelings of belonging. The lower levels of this

pyramid address the physiological needs that are most easily exploited by insurgents.

Maslow posited that human needs are necessarily hierarchical in nature, and that once a need has been satisfied, humans are motivated to achieve the next set of needs. Whether these needs are met or not affects human behavior; moreover, how these physical needs are met affects how humans perceive the future. According to Maslow, someone who is chronically hungry is always envisioning future success as having enough to eat and never wanting for food again. Once that need is achieved, the individual's perception of a successful future is altered to include the next, higher need. (A. H. Maslow 1999) It follows that basic needs of food, water, and shelter must be achieved for there to be any kind of stable society capable of pursuing abstract goals such as order and justice.

Losing Hearts and Minds

Rory Stewart, a former British infantryman and Deputy Governor of Iraq's Maysan district during the reconstruction period in Iraq, provides an example of how failure to meet basic needs ended in disaster. In his acclaimed work, *The Prince of the Marshes: And Other Occupational Hazards of a Year in Iraq*, he describes a reconstruction effort with lofty goals to provide basic needs for the populace, but with little money or

supervision to achieve them. Poorly run reconstruction efforts vulnerable to corruption and mismanagement were continuously undercut by well-financed Iranian agents who could provide the basic services the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) could not. Over time, this resulted in a deep-seated mistrust of the CPA, and the election of politicians with Iranian loyalties.

In addition to an ineffective CPA reconstruction effort, Stewart's efforts to provide for the populace in his district were further complicated by a military that was still focused solely on the enemy and not coordinated with the civil governance. In an exchange with a British soldier concerning the local population, Stewart was told, "I don't give a fucking monkey's about their welfare." (Stewart 2006) In retrospect, it's apparent that the security needs of the populace in early phases of Iraqi reconstruction were poorly understood or appreciated by the CPA's military partners. These conditions were favorable for the rapid growth of an insurgency in Iraq from whom we have only recently regained the initiative.

Not far from Iraq, another populace has been in play between two rival factions with similar results. For many years, Fatah represented the Palestinian people in their struggle for an independent state. In 1987, during the first intifada against Israel, a rival faction called Hamas was

created by Palestinian representatives of the Muslim Brotherhood. Over the next 20 years, even as Fatah continued to govern the provinces and negotiate on behalf of the Palestinian people, Hamas was making inroads with the populace by building schools, providing food to the poor, and restoring law and order to the streets of Gaza. In essence, Hamas was providing the basic physiological and security needs that form the base of Maslow's hierarchy to the people of Gaza, slowly whittling away any claim Fatah had to be representative of the Palestinian's interests.

Hamas' humanitarian actions stood in stark contrast to the perceived corruption and ineffectiveness of Fatah, and in June 2007, Hamas was democratically elected to govern the Gaza Strip. This event came as a surprise to Israel and to many in the west, but it shouldn't have. In the simple calculus of caring for the basic needs of the population, an organization that was seen internationally as a pariah and a terrorist organization was viewed very differently through the eyes of the Palestinians. While Hamas is not an insurgency, it is still an example of how a population can be won or lost over Maslow's so-called deficiency needs.

Where Maslow Falls Short

Many people may argue that the hierarchical construct of human needs proposed by Maslow is western-centric, and that the need for spirituality or self esteem may supersede the need for the physiological needs in other cultures or circumstances. For example, in the case of religious fasting, the individual may feel that spiritual needs are more important than nutritional needs. In a more extreme case, the terrorists who attacked the United States on 11 September 2001 were definitely circumventing their immediate physiological need – the biological imperative to continue living and procreate – for a deep seated conviction born from their jihadist beliefs.

Numerous studies and articles have been written on whether individuals are more likely to participate in terrorist activity as a result of material privation or lack of education. (Berrebi 2006) (Simons 2006) These studies actually found that terrorist activities are carried out, in large part, by people who are not desperate and are well-educated. These individuals, however, represent the intractable few true believers, and not the general populace we hope to influence

Cases where higher deficiency needs supersede physiological needs are almost always temporary, or else the human organism ceases to function. Suicide bombers and other fighters with no

regard for their own physiological needs are proportionally rare, and do not represent the greater population that COIN operations are trying to influence. Physiological needs are unassailable and cross-cultural, and must be considered the normative basic needs of all humans.

In recent years, the Marine Corps has made great strides in training to fight insurgencies around the globe. As a result of this training, this generation of Marines has a better understanding of culture than any before it. Building on the warfighter's knowledge of culture will undoubtedly have positive effects in future COIN operations – operations that the Marine Corps will continue to face for the foreseeable future.

What the Marine Corps cannot afford to miss in the midst of its newfound appreciation for each unique culture are the basic needs of all humans for food, water, shelter, and security. Any failure to provide these to the local populace in COIN operations will present an opportunity to the enemy to gain the initiative. Maslow's Hierarchy, while not perfect, does provide a starting point for earning the trust and cooperation of the local populace, and without this, COIN operations are doomed to fail.

Bibliography

Berrebi, Claude. *Evidence About the Link Between Education, Poverty and Terrorism Among Palestinians.* Paper, Princeton University, 2006.

Maslow, Abraham H. *Toward a Psychology of Being.* New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1999.

Maslow, Abraham H. "/Maslow's hierarchy of needs." *wikipedia.* Nov 12, 2007. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maslow's_hierarchy_of_needs, dtd 12 Nov 07. (accessed January 6, 2009).

Salmoni, Barak A, and Paula Holmes-Eber. *Operational Cutlure for the Warfighter: Principles and Applications.* Quantico: Marine Corps University Press, 2008.

Simons, Anna. "Making Enemies, Part 1." *The American Interest*, June/July 2006: 6-18.

Stewart, Rory. *The Prince of the Marshes: And Other Occupational Hazards of a Year in Iraq.* Orlando: Harcourt, Inc., 2006.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Self-actualization — morality, creativity, spontaneity, problem solving, lack of prejudice, acceptance of facts

Esteem — self-esteem, confidence, achievement, respect of others, respect by others

Love/Belonging — friendship, family, sexual intimacy

Safety — security of body, of employment, of resources, of morality, of the family, of health, of property

Physiological — breathing, food, water, sex, sleep, homeostasis, excretion